

Date: October 26, 2020
From: Robyn Stowers
To:
Subject: Commissioner Eudaly Experience

In 2017, I was recruited to work for newly elected Commission Chloe Eudaly. At the time I had seven years of local government experience working mostly in community and economic development and I was excited to work with a progressive representative on renter protections. However, nothing in my work experience prepared me for the 30-day bombardment of institutional racism, white feminism, divisive politics and dysfunctional office culture.

Here is a list of anti-Black behaviors I witnessed and spoke out about during my time in Eudaly's office:

- Lack of representation of BIPOC at outreach events
- Silenced Black women at townhalls who spoke on housing concerns
- Fetishized a Black employee by grabbing him and saying, 'I love Black men'
- Placed women of color in subordinate positions regardless of position, I was personally asked to wash dishes and get coffee.
- When the grieving family of Quanice Hayes, a 17-year-old Black youth who was murdered by Portland police in 2017, came to the office she rolled her eyes and said, "Not them again."
- Silenced the voices of Black Lives Matter advocates, like Teressa Raiford, by passing ordinances to eject and ban protesters from the council chambers
- Disinterested in cannabis equity and said she, 'didn't want to waste her time on people who just want to get stoned' even after I pointed out how the BIPOC are disproportionately harmed by a racist criminal justice system.
- Terrorized Bureaus by firing many BIPOC employees without notice. I refused to 'spy' but I offered to perform assessments.
- During a conversation about a Gateway development project, she laughed and said, 'I forget that is Portland. I don't consider anything past 82nd as Portland.'

In addition to the overt racism, the dysfunctional structure of Portland's archaic commissioner form government further highlighted Eudaly's divisive leadership style and inability to listen. Instead of working together to create effective comprehensive policy the office strategized against the bureaus she was elected to represent and support.

- The last project I worked on was the lead dust and asbestos demolition abatement ordinance. When I started, the first things I asked the project manager were; What resources do we have to invest in this program? What are the tracking metrics? I was surprised to learn that the project was so far along and they hadn't thought of those questions and had not engaged Bureau staff. There was an obvious disconnect between policy creation and implementation.

Flash forward ten months, the City unanimously passed the most comprehensive abatement program in the state. However, seventeen-months later, it was [reported](#) that less than 20% of demolitions were being inspected and the City was failing in its obligation to protect children from toxic lead dust. Many of these challenges may have been prevented with a more inclusive and forward thinking leadership model.

I received a letter of separation after 30 days of employment which was understandable as I challenged the office culture daily. In all, I learned a lot from my experience at Eudaly's office and made a lot of good friends. A major takeaway is to be careful about how people appear on paper, Eudaly looked great but her actions demonstrated that this is not a person that understands, respects or fights for BIPOC communities. Portland deserves better. BLACK LIVES MATTER.